

Mayor's Report
Saturday, May 16, 2015
Deborah G. Owens

I would like to begin by reporting that the City Commission and Staff have been very busy embarking on a strategic planning process in identifying our mission, vision, goals and objectives. The City will be working over the next year to determine the services that are most important to our residents and apply resources toward those. We will be asking employees and community stakeholders to help with this process. We have currently identified eight results (goals) on which we will work, with the help of others, to apply definitions. This, along with looking at Priority Based Budgeting, will help City leadership and the community have a full understanding of what we do and why we do it, making sure it is all relevant and of value.

Secondly, we are committed to pushing forward in making sure people doing business with our City are, indeed, successful. As you know, and as I have reported, we are in the midst of a comprehensive review, which includes public involvement, in making sure we work with all facets of the City's Inspection Division to streamline where necessary to provide the best services to our many and varied customers. As this process continues in a very transparent manner, I would encourage you to look on the City's website, under Inspections, to keep apprised as to our progress.

In an effort to keep our community up-to-date on Michigan Department of Transportation construction, which began on May 4 on the new I-94 Business Loop (BL) Bridge over I-94 and ramps at Exit 92, construction is expected to be completed by mid-November. This project will include portions of Columbia Avenue and Helmer Road. Additionally the section of I-94 BL from Hill Brady Road to M-96 (Dickman Road) will be removed in order to accommodate expanding munitions storage at the adjacent military installation. Motorists should expect intermittent closures as needed for ramp construction.

Another project of the Michigan Department of Transportation, and much more visible in our City, is the repaving of more than five miles of M-89 (Michigan Avenue) from Custer Drive to Washington Avenue and Washington Avenue from Michigan Avenue to I-94 Business Loop/Dickman Road. This project also started on May 4 and is intended to be completed on Sept. 4. We ask for your patience as these two major projects by the Michigan Department of Transportation are under way.

I am also very happy to announce that the new Festival Market Square was opened at a ribbon-cutting on Friday, May 15, at the corner of Jackson and McCamly streets. This project design was developed through an extensive public input process which we are very proud. The first major event at the redesigned space will be the Battle Creek Farmers Market, followed by the Post Band Concert Series, outdoor movies and the Vibe@5 concerts. This is, indeed, a multi-functional space for our community.

As Mayor, I had the distinct opportunity to address the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees and the Michigan Aeronautics Commission during recent visits to Battle Creek to conduct their board meetings. These are two very distinguished and well-respected boards, whose decisions have a major impact on our young people, as with WMU and the ability to keep Michigan's airports state-of-the-art and safe by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission.

It was further my privilege to attend and speak at the Generation E Business Showcase and the presentation of a proclamation in celebration of their 10th anniversary. The showcase is an opportunity for our students to display their educator-approved operational businesses. It was a very impressive display of businesses designed and items manufactured by these great entrepreneurs.

Later in the evening was the American Legion Post 298 61st Annual Student Awards. Nearly 100 students from 10 area schools received these awards based on the following criteria: Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service. Sen. Nofs was the keynote speaker and I was pleased to speak on the topic of leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this report with you! Do enjoy the beautiful spring weather in this great City of Battle Creek.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah G. Owens

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